



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

# News Release

February 2, 2006

## **ICE ARRESTS WOMAN CONCEALING MORE THAN 4 KILOS OF HEROIN**

*-Contraband was concealed between several layers of plastic and carbon paper-*

MAYAGUEZ, Puerto Rico—A 39-year-old woman from the Dominican Republic was arrested here yesterday by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) special agents for attempting to smuggle 4.22 kilograms of heroin.

Justina Jacqueline Ayala-Tapia's suspicious and erratic body language prompted U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) inspectors to refer her to a secondary inspection following her arrival at the Mayaguez port-of-entry from Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

The examination of Ayala-Tapia's luggage by inspectors and K-9 units revealed four hidden packages wrapped in plastic with several layers of carbon paper and a petrolatum substance that tested positive to heroin during a required field test.

"ICE agents work closely with CBP inspectors to detect those who try to smuggle contraband through our ports-of-entry and think that they can circumvent our immigration and customs laws," said Lydia St. John-Mellado, acting special agent-in-charge of ICE investigations in Puerto Rico. "Our agents and inspectors have the technical expertise, resources and technology to detect illegal merchandise and contraband in our ports and will simply not tolerate this flagrant violation of law."

Ayala-Tapia was charged with violations to Title 18, United States Code (USC), Sections 542 and 545 and Title 21 USC, Sections 841(a) 1 and 952 (a). Ayala-Tapia is in ICE custody at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico awaiting the outcome of her case.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*